

**Board of Forestry and Fire Protection  
Range Management Advisory Committee (RMAC)**

**Minutes  
June 22, 2005**

**Attending:**

**RMAC:**

Ken Zimmerman, Chairman  
Mike Connor  
J.R. McCollister  
Leonard Hale  
Henry Giacomini  
Clancy Dutra via conference call  
Mel Thompson via conference call  
Jeff Stephens

**Representing**

California Cattlemen's Association  
Public Member  
Public Member  
Watershed Fire Council of Southern CA  
Farm Bureau  
Farm Bureau  
CA Wool Growers Association  
CDF / RMAC Executive Secretary

**Members of the Public:**

Tracy Schohr                      California Cattlemen's Association

**Call to Order and Introductions:**

Agenda items 1, 2, and 3 of the agenda: Ken Zimmerman called the meeting to order at 8:25 a.m. Introductions of all present were made. He then asked for a review and approval of the minutes for the April 20, 2005. One change in wording to page 4 noted for correction. Minutes were approved with the correction.

**Agenda Item 5, Agency and Association Reports:**

The Chairman altered the order of the agenda recognizing Tracy Schohr with the California Cattlemen's Association (CCA). Miss School reported three items of interest currently receiving attention from Cattlemen's Association: 1) Endangered Species, 2) Waste water discharge and associated Ag Waivers for non point source pollution (NPS) on irrigated pasture lands, focusing on the Central Valley Regional Board, 3) Incidental take permits with the goal of making the process more user friendly.

Mike Connor raised the question on NPS asking how long it will be before small landowners are impacted by NPS. Miss Schohr responded by stating that the targeted areas seem to be around rivers and letters from the Water Board have been sent to these landowners. RMAC members raised the issue of whether a landowner may demonstrate no discharge from the property in question. Henry

Giacomini responded stating that unless the property is entirely contained within a basin no discharge is tough to demonstrate.

Ken Zimmerman confirmed with Tracy Schohr that she and Susan LeGrande are the contacts for water issues with CCA. He also asked Miss Schohr to provide a copy of a position letter when it becomes available on SB 646.

#### **Agenda Item 6, Committee Reports:**

##### **Water Focus Group:**

Henry Giacomini led a discussion reviewing the session of June 21, 2005 on the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Board's consideration of regulation to enforce State Board policy on non point source pollution (NPS) related to grazing lands. He also reviewed discussion on Water Master Fee increases. Questions were raised by Leonard Hale as to whether fees can be limited and who appoints water masters. Henry Giacomini indicated that the fees are dependent upon decrees issued by a judge. He has also heard that some water masters are appointed by a judge, or the Department of Water Resources (DWR) is responsible for appointments. There is no legislation that governs who has absolute authority to make such appointments. There is new legislation known as the Cox Bill that will define who shall serve as a Water Master.

Henry Giacomini took issue with claims by DWR that approximately \$300,000 is required to fund one Water Master. The information that he has gathered indicates that 40-50% of this amount is for overhead and that the Head Water Master, the Resources Agency, and the Governor's office all are part of this overhead expense.

Ken Zimmerman asked that Tracy Schohr report back to RMAC on CCA's position on both the Kuehl and Cox bills. Tracy agreed to look into the matter.

RMAC Motion Number One: Discussion of the Focus Group closed with a motion to: Approach the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Board to meet with RMAC at their facility in South Lake Tahoe as part of a publicly noticed RMAC meeting; That the approach should be one of offering assistance to Lahontan in working through the issue of non point source (NPS) / waivers; Develop a paper/letter addressed to Lahontan providing RMAC's background, and offering assistance. Action on the motion was delayed until other RMAC members could participate by conference call later that morning.

##### **Range Land Focus Group:**

Ken Zimmerman described a proposed meeting between RMAC members and Secretary Chrisman of the Resources agency. The meeting is scheduled for June 28<sup>th</sup>. The issue for discussion is the growing complexity and regulation required of

private landowners and agencies to engage in resource management improvement projects. Examples have been identified by Chuck Pritchard.

Henry Giacomini, Ken Zimmerman, and Mike Connor raised the issue of the need for circulating all issues with George Gentry and Stan Dixon prior to the meeting with Secretary Chrisman. The proposed meeting will include both Mr. Gentry and Chairman Dixon.

#### Vegetation Management / Fire Focus Group:

Mike Connor proposed that Jeff Stephens reformat the document on recommendations to the Board regarding the Department's Vegetation Management Program. Out of this discussion came the following motion:

RMAC Motion Number Two: Accept the June 21, 2005 Draft Board Report on Vegetation Management; authorize Jeff Stephens to make corrections made per the June 21, 2005 RMAC meeting; have a finished copy available for review by the Resource Protection Committee at the July Board meeting.

Both Motions 1 and 2 were acted upon and passed unanimously by RMAC with committee members Clancy Dutra and Mel Thompson voting by conference call.

#### **Agenda Item 4, Setting RMAC Priorities for the 2005/06 Fiscal Year:**

Ken Zimmerman asked that each Focus Group present their priorities for the coming year.

#### Water Focus Group:

Henry Giacomini cited the work with Lahontan as being a primary priority. The process of developing conditional waivers could take as long as two years. If the meeting with Lahontan is successful then Mr. Giacomini anticipates work assignments for Focus Group members on the issues of NPS and the waiver process.

Henry Giacomini asked for the paper generated for Range Conservationists dealing with the workshop on Resource Professionals and water quality. This paper was supplied by Jeff Stephens during this session of RMAC.

Mike Connor recommended that RMAC add to the Water Focus Group list of activities monitoring the actions taken by the Central Valley Regional Board. RMAC members agreed and discussed the potential of contacting the Coalition Leaders and engage them with RMAC activities in regarding the issue of conditional waivers.

Henry Giacomini returned to the issue of the meeting with Lahontan Water Quality. He agreed to develop the paper/letter offering assistance to Lahontan. Ken Zimmerman asked if a time table of events may be developed that tracks the events that have resulted in the current situation with the NPS and grazing lands. Henry Giacomini stated that he will inquire with the Tony Francois (Farm Bureau) to determine if one may be developed.

Ken Zimmerman cited two key reports mentioned in the literature distributed by Tony Francois, and asked Jeff Stephens to obtain the reports. Jeff agreed to provide the documents: "Water Quality Control Policy for Developing California's Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List," and "Policy for Implementation and Enforcement of the Non Point Source Pollution Control Program."

#### Vegetation Management/fire Focus Group:

J.R. McCollister stated that the Department's re-write of the State Fire Plan shall be high on the agenda for this focus group. He intends to monitor development of the Plan.

Ken Zimmerman cited Neil McDougald's language in the recommendations to the Board on Vegetation Management regarding watershed function. He cautioned against NPS rules and regulations that may be in conflict with development of the new Vegetation Management Program EIR. Henry Giacomini commented that future Ranch Plans required by Water Quality may overlap vegetation management and prescribed burning issues. J.R. McCollister agreed that both the new EIR and NPS issues are related and should be monitored for conflicts with the new EIR.

#### Policy Focus Group:

Ken Zimmerman stated that he wishes to continue fostering the relationship between RMAC and the Board, as previously noted by Mike Connor in earlier discussion.

Henry Giacomini took this opportunity to ask what is the expected outcome of the Secretary Chrisman meeting with RMAC. Ken Zimmerman stated that he expects RMAC to be challenged to find solutions to the problems noted among agencies regarding red tape and lack of cooperation.

This concluded the Focus Group discussion.

#### **General Discussion:**

J.R. McCollister asked Ken Zimmerman if he would like a write-up on Focus group priorities for the next meeting in August. Ken Zimmerman responded affirmatively.

Ken Zimmerman inquired as to the status of Steve Hackett since at one time he had expressed a desire to resign from RMAC. Mike Connor recommended that RMAC work through Mel Thompson and Wool Growers to find a suitable replacement for nomination if indeed Steve wishes to leave the Committee.

Mike Connor returned discussion of the Committee to the Report to the Board on CDF's Vegetation Management Program (VMP). He stated that the report is not an indictment of any single staff member, but rather a change in program direction that emphasizes increased use of VMP for fuel hazard reduction. Henry Giacomini stated that the report should be viewed as RMAC's opinion based on the facts before the Committee. Leonard Hale noted that the situation with VMP did not develop overnight; it has been a long transition to the current condition. He also noted little continuity in the Federal program for vegetation management due to staff changes and abandoned work plans.

Close of discussion. The next meeting for RMAC is August 16-17, 2005.

Meeting adjourned 11:25 a.m.